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AUTHOR(S):

SAKITA, Tomoko I.

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Functions of Reporting Discourse from a Discourse-Analytic Perspective

Tomoko I. Sakita
Kyoto University
E-mail: sakita@hi.h.kyoto-u.ac.jp

0. Abstract

This study examines cases of linguistic performance using the methods of discourse analysis, to show how functions of strategic reporting discourse correlate with discourse patterns and styles. This study demonstrates that reporting discourse is rule governed, goal-directed, purposeful linguistic activity, by discussing the main functions related to evidentiality, information grounding, and dramatization.

1. Introduction

When people want to or need to convey information communicated in the past or which might be communicated in the future or which is even now being communicated either by themselves or by others, they use reporting discourse¹. Speech reporting is essential to the nature of language. Without it, language would be fatally limited in its potential (Coulmas, 1986).

Reporting discourse has been studied by researchers from a variety of perspectives. Literary critics have looked at the significance of reported speech for narratorship (e.g., Feldman et al., 1990). Anthropologists and ethnographers started to look at reported speech as a social tool (e.g., Besnier, 1992). Linguists have focused their attention primarily on the grammatical structure of reported speech constructions, trying to answer questions such as when and why tense and deixis shift in indirect quotation (Comrie, 1986); whether indirect reporting style can be derived from direct reporting style (e.g., Wierzbicka, 1974); whether a quote functions grammatically as the object of the reporting verb (Munro, 1982). Recent pragmatic approaches considering transactional and interactional functions of language (Brown & Yule, 1983) led a few linguists to look at the meaning of reporting discourse in linguistic performance (e.g., Tannen, 1988; 1989). The discourse analytic new approach reflects the claim that every utterance derives from and echoes "prior text," and the polyphonic nature of all utterance derives from the multiple resonances of the people, context, and genres with which the utterance has been associated (Tannen, 1988; 1989). This consideration significantly deepens insights into reporting discourse phenomena, because the reporting discourse is a dynamic interrelationship between the speech being reported and the speech doing the reporting (Voloshinov, 1986), and divorcing of the reported speech from the reporting contexts obstructs the way to understanding the dynamics.

In this study, as part of my on-going research, I take a discourse analytic approach toward reporting functions and styles, aiming to find out a discourse pattern of human reporting behavior. It is to see what people do when they participate in reporting discourse as rule governed, goal-directed and purposeful linguistic actions. In a sense, I share a common goal of establishing a dialogue grammar with Hundsniischer (1980) and Franke (1990) in supposing that there are systems of rules that determine well-formed sequences of speech acts and coherent dialogues. However, in contrast

¹I use the term "reporting discourse" rather than "reported speech" since I include reported written communications as well as reported spoken communications in the term. This term also has the wider scope for including not only the surface language phenomena but also the human reporting behavior in interactions.

to their methodology² of working out the rules without looking at the actual dialogue performances, I take a discourse analytic approach looking at the daily linguistic performances documented in transcriptions. Only in this approach, I believe, the reporting discourse and its patterns can be fully understood in the dynamics of human communication.

I present observations of reporting discourse in English, focusing on its human interactional functions. I pick up some of the main functions related to 1) evidentiality; 2) foreground and background information; and 3) dramatization, to show reporting discourse as a discourse strategic device. The dialogue pattern of scripts is shown for some of the main functions. Certain tendencies of different reporting styles emerge as characteristics of each function, which are summarized on a continuum in the end.

2. Method

This study takes qualitative approach to reporting discourse in American English. From sixteen conversational data situated in different settings, six are chosen and carefully examined³: a telephone conversation between two females; a telephone conversation between two males; a face to face conversation among two females and one male; a dinner table conversation among three females and two males; a female interviewed by a female; and a male interviewed by a male. The first four are the casual spoken language among friends, in which participants are less conscious about their discourse style and have less psychological constraint in producing speech. The two interviews are semi-formal. In data analysis procedure, the transcripts⁴ as well as audiotapes were examined.

3. Functions of Reporting Discourse

3.1 Support or Aid of Opinions

Reporting discourse is claimed as a form of evidentiality. As defined by Chafe (1986), evidentiality is the linguistic means of indicating how the speaker obtained the information on which she/he bases an assertion. Because evidentiality functions as an indication of the source and reliability of a speaker's knowledge, the speaker can strengthen her/his argument by quoting other people's speech.

3.1.1 To disagree with or to convince others

People use reporting discourse to convince others who do not share the same opinions, or to

²Hundsnurscher and Franke's dialogue grammar put the heuristic priority of the analysis of competence to the description of linguistic performance. In this respect, they have adopted the methodological principle from transformational grammar.

³Sociolinguistic correlational studies (e.g., Sanchez, 1987; Rimmer, 1988) have pointed out inter-personal variations of reporting discourse. It is expected that the usage of reporting discourse is affected by many factors: discourse style, genre, purpose, settings of the discourse, relationship between the speakers and the hearers; gender and age. There is perceived a need for both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data (Rimmer, 1988). This study, as a first step of functional study of reporting discourse, focused on the narrower aspect of the variations.

⁴The following notational conventions are used in the transcripts of the conversational data:

(0.0) length of silence
: lengthened syllable
- sound cut off in a delivery
= two utterances are latched without a usual beat of silence
? rising intonation
() unintelligible stretch
hh audible breath or laughter

Underlining is used to draw attention to the appearance of reporting discourse.

disagree with others. Look at the following conversation. N tells H about her pimples, and describes how badly it hurt when she went to a doctor.

(a)(HG)

N: It (js) hu:rt so bad Hyla I wz cry::ing,=

H: =Yhher khhiddi:ng.

N: nNo::.. He really hurt me he goes I'm sorry. hh wehhh hh I khho th(h)at dznt make i(h)t a(h)n(h)y better yihknow he wz jst (o.4) so, e-he didn't mean to be but he wz really hurting me.

N starts talking about her pimples that the doctor opened up. She emphasizes the seriousness of her pain by first saying "It hurt so bad." H seems to be surprised and cannot believe the seriousness, and thus utters the remark, "You're kidding." Against this, N says "No" and repeats the same information, "He really hurt me." Then she quotes the doctor's remark, "I'm sorry, well I know that doesn't make it any better" and concludes by saying "He was really hurting me" again. In (a), N used the reporting discourse as a means to convince H that her pimples were really serious. This exchange can be simplified in a pattern as follows:

N: proposition

H: disagreement or doubt

N: "No" proposition speech reporting proposition

The reporting discourse functions as evidence to support one's proposition when facing disagreement from other parties.

In the next example, the similar exchanges can be seen that H is not convinced by what N says, and N quotes the doctor in order to strengthen her remark. Here N and H are discussing what is good and bad for pimples. N starts by saying that the doctor gave her some pills to take.

(b)(HG)

N: So 'e gay me these pills tih ta:ke?=
H: =what. Tetracyuhleen?

N: PT No: cuz I usetuh take that an' it didn' he:lp so 'e gay me something

e:lse.=

H: =Hm:.

N: He sai:d- yihknow, (o.2) sometimes Tetracyklene jus doesn' he:lp.

N: Also he sid that (o.3) t what you ea:t. (o.2) end how you wash yer face has nothing tih do with it.

H: Yer kidding.

N: nNo:.,

N: He says 't's all inside you it's 'n emotional thing'n, hhh e:n,

H: Yeah buh

whatchu ea:t if you eat greasy foo:d=

N: =We:h he said it's no:t the fact that you've eaten the greasy food it's a' fact that you worry about it. En that makes you break ou:t.

At line 2, H shows her idea that Tetracycline, a kind of medicine, is good for pimples. Against this, N says "No.....it didn't help." Then she quotes the doctor, "sometimes Tetracycline just doesn't help," in order to support her remark. We can observe the pattern in which the speaker first faces a

different opinion, negates it (No), raises the proposition, then quotes another person's speech (doctor's remark). So this also shows the use of reportings as an aid to support one's proposition when disagreeing with others in the following pattern:

H: different opinion

N: "No" proposition speech reporting

At line 7, N tells H her belief that what to eat and how to wash face has nothing to do with pimples by quoting the doctor's remark (this quote is not what I am interested in here). Against H's remark of "You're kidding," N says "No" and quotes the doctor's remark of "It's all inside you it's an emotional thing" to support what she said. But H is not convinced yet and still disagrees, saying "Yeaah but ... if you eat greasy food." N further quotes what the doctor said to convince H. We can observe the similar pattern of exchange as above.

N: proposition

H: disagreement or doubt

N: "No" speech reporting

H: disagreement

N: "Well" speech reporting

Another example with the same pattern is as follows:

(c)(SN)

M: they wanted t'get my au:tograph.

R: uh huh!

S: Yer kidding.

R: Oh my go::sh=

M: =No(,) They said that they wanted my au:tograph.

Against M's remark that some girls wanted his autograph, R and S show surprise and doubt, then M says "No" and quotes the girls' remark to convince them.

A basic pattern for the function observed in (a)(b)(c) is summarized as follows:

1. (Proposition)
2. meet Disagreement, Doubt, Different opinion
3. "No" + (Proposition) + Speech reporting + (Proposition)

3.1.2 To answer questions without enough background

Since reporting discourse functions as evidentiality, "the kinds of evidence a person has for making factual claims (Anderson, 1986)," it is used as a discourse strategy to compensate for one's lack of information even for stating a proposition itself. This is observed when people are expected to answer questions but lack enough background to answer them. In the next example, N asks H about a man, but H has not met him yet, then she answers by reporting the words of her friend.

(d)(HG)

N: Well wt's (.) wt's he li:ke.

H: hhhhhhh a-ah: she says (.) he y'know,

th'las'ime she saw im which wz (.) three years ago he wz pretty good looking.

N: Uh hu:h,

H: t hhh

H: A:nd u:m,

H: t k you know she says eez a veewy nice guy,eez a rea:l, (0.7) t good pers'n.

To answer N's question, "What is he like," H cannot give her personal opinion because she has never met him. She tries to answer the question anyway by quoting her friend who has already met him. This is one of the convenient discourse strategies in carrying on conversation. It also enables the speaker to avoid personal commitment or responsibility in answering questions, since the speaker herself/himself does not give any personal opinion. In the following, the speaker shifts the responsibility to the authority even in giving his personal opinion:

(c)(AE, 1992.6:105)

K: Just from your own personal point of view, what are the important issues?

N: Well, in the words of George Bush, jobs, and jobs, jobs, or maybe he said, jobs, jobs and jobs.

K: And jobs, right.

The use of reporting discourse as a means of avoiding taking personal responsibility is cross-linguistically observed (e.g., Kuhn 1989; Besnier, 1992).

3.2 Showing Effect

Yamanashi (1995) discusses that natural language reflects the speaker's perspectives in style choice. He contrasts foreground and background information in five aspects: new and old information; conclusion and premise; existing object and background place/space; moving object and scene; coded part and omitted part. In this line of contrast, I suggest that quotings function to foreground climax in a series of speech events which are background contexts. This is, in other words, "showing" salient information and "describing" contextual information.

3.2.1 Showing climax or punchline

Reporting discourse is used "to show" instead of "to describe" climax or punchline in a series of events that the speaker is telling other people. Let us look at the first example:

(f)(HG)

H: ='n then, hhm (0.2) tch en the:(w)- the mother's hh sister is a real bigot.

N: i - Y a : h,

H: Yihknow en she hates anyone who isn' a Catholic.=

H: =hhh a:nd this boy is Jewish. hh An' tshe- this girl's fixed up onna da-bline da:te.An' the(g)- en turns out t'be this gu:y.=

N: =Uh hu:h,

H: hhhh An' they goes oh I hear yer of the Jewish faith yihknow so 'ere's a whole thing in that, hhhhhh=

H is explaining about a movie. Before this paragraph, she has described the boy in the excerpt as

very handsome, rich, and nice. H wants to explain why the girl did not get him and the result was sad. The context from the first to the fourth line makes clear that the mother's sister hates anyone who is not a Catholic. At the fifth line, she says that the boy is a Jewish. On this condition, the boy and the girl were fixed on a blind date. By this point, anyone would naturally expect that the mother and her sister do not like the boy and that the girl and the boy cannot get together. There is little need to describe what is happening next. Rather, the hearer's curiosity is to know how the next episode happened rather than what it was. For this purpose, "to show" the climax is more effective than simply to summarize or describe it. H used a direct quotation from the movie for this effect.

In contrast to the above example, I will show one example in a similar context where H describes the movie using a reporting discourse, but does not have the same function of showing the climax as in the above example.

(g)(HG)

H: It's jist like the psychological backgroun' behind all these different people in this: fam'ly.=

N: Mm hm: =

H: =hh Li:ke, the husbin:d (.) i:s, (.) He's- yihknow(t)- (.) He's la:st iz job becuz they said 'e w:z too o:ld yihknow en eez tryina make a l:iving en, hh en 'e can't s'pport iz fam'ly, hh en the wi:fe hh therefore can't give hi:m: any sex becu:z she fig:ures he's no:t yihknow (.) being responsible enough en she's s:so worried about the chi:ldren, =

Although H is describing the movie just as in the example (f) and uses the reporting discourse, the point at which the reporting discourse is used at the fifth line is not the climax nor the punchline. We can even expect that there will come a climax later. So the part where the reporting discourse is used is a context for the coming climax. This seems to contradict (f) in that reporting discourse is used for background information as well as for climax. An important difference between (f) and (g) is the reporting style. The one used here in (g) is indirect style, while the one in (f) is direct. In comparing the above two examples, I assume that the reporting discourse is used to show the climax in a series of events, and that direct rather than indirect style is used for this function. This is in agreement with what Yule (1992) pointed out. According to Yule, direct speech style is used to report how something was said, and indirect style is often used to report what was said. Although Yule's argument was mainly focused on the direct reportings which occurred with no introductory verbs (i.e. zero quotation), the example (f) shows "go" as another matrix verb for this function.

3.2.2 Exemplifying and demonstrating emotion

The function of showing effect as illustrated above is applied to another situation: emotional context. In order to exemplify one's emotion, reporting discourse is used to show the emotion rather than to simply state it. The pattern for this function is that the speaker first states her/his emotion and then demonstrates what she/he felt in her/his mind. In the next example, V's father had a surgery, and C's mother told V that the surgery was unnecessary.

(h)(V)

V: There was no confusion. An I was calm with it n then- when- when yer Mom said that I was frustrated like oh that's ridiculous. But then when I talked to my Mom and she w:z all hysterical, then I started getting hysterical.

- C: Yeah.
 V: Like oh my Go:d all this for nothing, my Dad was Okay:.
 C: Yeah
 K: O:h(h)
 V: he could ski, he could wa:lk, why's he going though this pai:n=

At line 2, V says "I was frustrated," then she shows how she actually felt or thought in her mind by saying "like oh that's ridiculous." Again at line 3, V says "I started getting hysterical" and then she shows what actually was in her mind by saying "Like oh my God all this for nothing, my Dad was Okay." In both cases, V changes her voice and demonstrates her emotion vividly. These reported events might have been actually uttered to "your Mom" and "my Mom," or might have been orally produced as saying to herself, or simply she thought them in her mind. Both of the above cases are introduced by "like" and in direct style, in the following pattern:

emotion + "like" + direct style

Let me cite a similar example, but with a different introductory phrase. The context for the following is the same as the above. In this case, K is talking about V's emotional episode.

(i)(V)

- K: An uh she got off the pho:ne an she was incredibly upset?
 C: Mm hm
 K: She wz goin God do you think they're performing unnecessary surgery on my Dad or some'm like that?

At the first line, K describes V's emotion, saying "she was incredibly upset" and shows how she was actually upset by saying "She wz goin God do you think they're performing unnecessary surgery on my Dad." A basic pattern for (h) and (i) is summarized as follows:

emotion + (introducer) + direct style

Reportings function to describe the emotion vividly in this pattern. In all cases the reporters change their voice. Although it is possible to convey the propositional emotion by simply stating it, the reporter demonstrates it in order to make it sound vivid. These patterns also have the effect of arousing interest in the listeners' mind about how and to what degree the reported speaker was frustrated, or how and to what degree the reported speaker was hysterical, by first simply mentioning the emotion. This is as if the speaker first grounds the background foundation in the hearer's mind, and then shows the emotional content as the foreground. For this function, direct style is used. Further assumption is that the reporting verb "like" is preferred as a dialogue introducer. When we consider that an emotion is of a mixed nature in the mind and that it may be hard to isolate and report only one feeling from the mixed, the verb "like" well elucidates the feeling. It is used as "for example." Although "She wz goin" is used very quickly in (i), the reporter adds "or something like that" at the end of the report. This shows that the emotion just mentioned is not the exact utterance by the reported speaker but an example or a demonstration. This function is also observed in reporting the emotion which is represented as an inner speech.

(j)

T: It don't happen overnight. Sometime you can get very disgusted thinking, you know, I can't get nothing going, nothing happening. You know, I talked to people and still, you know, everybody turning me down or this or that.

In (j), the speaker mentions the emotion or feeling “very disgusted” followed by “thinking” and the direct reporting of the content of the inner feeling. This is also an exemplified emotion as we can see by “or this or that” in the end.

3.3 Dramatization (Constructed Dialogue)

Past linguists have supposed that reporting discourse is used for reporting speech events which existed in the past, but it is not always true. Tannen (1988; 1989) questions the literal conception of “reported speech.” She claims instead that “uttering dialogue in conversation is as much a creative act as is the creation of dialogue in fiction and drama.” She further suggests the use of the term “constructed dialogue” instead of “reported speech,” because “the dialogue animated in the narrative was not actually spoken by the person to whom it is attributed.” She raises the next example in which a speaker represents, in a form of dialogue, what she did NOT say to her father.

(k) a little girl: You can't say, “Well Daddy I didn't hear you.”

This dialogue is constructed rather than reported, as the speaker states explicitly by “You can't say” that the line of dialogue was not spoken. Tannen raises examples from dialogue representing what wasn't said, dialogue as instantiation⁵, summarizing dialogue, dialogue as inner speech, inner speech of others, dialogue constructed by a listener, fade-out and fade-in, vague referents, and nonhuman speaker. I will further show that reporting discourse is used to represent future events and imaginary events. In such situations, the reporters play the roles of the reported speakers as actors. Such dialogues accompany dramatization effect.

3.3.1 Demonstrating imaginary or future events

To demonstrate something which might occur in the future, or to narrate an imaginary interaction, people use reporting discourse. The first example is narrating an imaginary letter writing. N and H are talking on a phone about a man named Richard who lives far away. H loves him and waits for him to write her a letter, but he never does. They say that it takes him a while to write, and start the following conversation:

(l)(HG)

H: khh-hh-hhe writes one word a day, hhihnh
 N: Yeahhh
 N: Dea:r? hh nex'day Hyla,=
 H: = u u hhh
 N: Ho:w?
 H: hhhi: nh heh-heh,
 N A:re?
 N: You:.=

H says “he writes one word a day,” then N jokingly demonstrates how slowly he writes, while H is

⁵The use of reporting discourse to exemplify one's emotion involved in the showing effect discussed in 3.2.2 is considered similar to Tannen's idea of the use of dialogue for instantiation.

laughing all the time. This is a sentence that N imagined that Richard would write. N changes her voice slightly and speaks slowly, which makes the reporting discourse more real.

The next example is for narrating an imaginary telephone conversation. N and H imagine that Richard will make a long distance call to H.

(m)(HG)

N: Three minutes yeh that's not rilly that long,=
 N: =tuh ta:lk,
 H: It's- hh
 N: Hi howareyou.=
 H: =mhhhhhhehhh
 N: Click.

In this example, N says that three minutes is not so long to talk, and demonstrates how short it is. N changes her voice and speaks the part "Hi howareyou" very quickly, and then demonstrates the sound that the telephone is disconnected with low voice imitating the machinery sound. This shows that the reporting discourse is used in order to demonstrate the imaginary future conversation. Both (l) and (m) accompany the effect of irony and joke. This function has the effect of dramatization, as well as the showing effect. Speakers act as actors/actresses in the imaginary conversation. Sanchez (1988) considers dramatization effect as a function of direct reporting style. This is considered particularly true for zero quotation (Mathis, 1991). Both examples above conform to these arguments. Wierzbicka (1974) pointed out that direct speech is characterized by its "theatrical" nature: the reporter acts as the reported speaker when she/he utters the direct quote. The reporter plays the role of the reported speaker. The reporter intends for the hearer to believe that the form, the content, and the non-verbal messages such as gestures and facial expressions of the reported speech originate from the reported speaker (Li, 1986). I consider that dramatization effect is an altered version of theatrical nature. Li (1986) represents the theatrical nature in two parts. First, the reporter identifies the reported speaker. Second, the reporter acts as the reported speaker. This means that the theatrical nature presupposes the identification of the reported speaker, and thus needs a matrix clause. However, the dramatization function does not require the identification of the speaker, because it is a shared knowledge given by the context. So, the reporting with the dramatization function occurs only in one part, which is the second part of the theatrical nature: the reporter acts as the reported speaker. Thus, zero quotation is the characteristic of this function.

Two more examples are raised in the following, which add a new dimension to the dramatization effect: cooperative reporting. In the example (n), H and N are talking on a telephone about Richard who never writes to H. N suggests that H write a thank you note to Richard saying "thank you for not writing." Then they start building up the narration of letter writing together.

(n)(HG)

N: En the:n, send im a thankyou no(h)te, hh
 H: hehh ()
 H: uh hhh
 N: hnhhh hh
 H: Thankyou fer no(h)t wri(h)ti(h)ng.=
 N: =Dear Rich(h)ar(h)d. hhh hh
 (0.4)
 N: Thankyou. hhhhhuh.
 N: hhhhhhh

H: For nothing.
 N: For ruining my life. heh
 H: heh heh heh huh,
 N: hhhhhh A:n' now I going t'commit sui c-uh-huh- huh-huh
 H: hehh heh By th'time yih git t h i s:. h h eh I will be dead.=
 H: =I(hh) h(h)ope. hhh
 N: he-he-he
 H: =hhh I hope you.hhnh=
 N: ahhhhhhh
 N: =hn=
 H: =live with a clea(h)r conscience hn
 N: hhhhh hhhhhh But if you do n'want that tih happen.=
 N: =I will hang in there.if you will c(h)a(h)ll=
 H: =e- e- e- uh- uh- uh- uh- uh,
 H: hhhhh
 (N: hn-uh=)
 H: =I will give you: ten sec'nds after you read this le(h)tter.

After N's remark "then, send him a thank you note," H started the narration by saying "Thank you for not writing." N immediately follows this by "Dear Richard...Thank you..." and kept laughing without finishing the sentence. H took the turn and finished N's sentence by "for nothing." N went on to make it more ironic, by "for ruining my life." The rest of the letter goes on with N and H taking turns. These collaboratively built up exchanges are filled with laughter. They do not intend to actually write a letter, but simply enjoy the irony of the idea of writing a thank you letter to Richard who did nothing for H. In this reporting discourse, both of the conversation participants, usually characterized as a speaker and a hearer, play the parts of reporters. Both of the conversation participants are actors/actresses in the drama.

The similar example is a narration of an imaginary telephone conversation. In the same context as above, H and N suppose that Richard is calling Hyla, and imagine what the phone conversation will be like. They change their voice very much to imitate Richard, Hyla, the telephone operator, and the telephone disconnecting sound, to make the imaginary conversation more real. They start this narration by saying that he should have something good to say because the long-distance call is expensive.

(o)(HG)

H: Y'bedder'v sump'n good tuh sa:y, hhh=
 N: =hhhhh=
 H: = hhh Li-ike hh will you ma-arry me? hhh
 N: h u h uh h e h hhh
 H: hih h e h e h
 N: hhh Will y' marry me?
 N: Click.
 H: hhhhh That's wor(h)th (.) fhhour dhollahhrs,=
 H: hhih
 N: =Please deposit five cents for the next (.) one minu(h)te?=
 H: eh eh eh k
 H: = eh eh eh
 N: Hyla w't's ver a:nsver w't's ver answer-
 N: Plea:se dep o s i t fifty ce(h)nts.
 H: hhh: hhh uh uh uh: uh h uh u h

N: huuhh
 H: hhh hh=
 H: =Hyla ('d) bett(h)er be yes or ah'll shoo(h)oot-
 N: Don't take so much time t u h think=
 N: =It's costing me money, hh
 H: hhh: hhh: hhh:
 N: hhhhhh
 H: This's investing in yer ri(h)ng en=

We can observe that H and N cooperatively make up the imaginary telephone conversation, acting the four roles including telephone sound, like a drama. Since one of the purposes of this series of reportings is for N to encourage H with a joke, N is likely to speak more at the beginning in both of the above examples. The fact that H is laughing out loud and starts being involved in the collaboration shows the success of N's encouragement. The dramatization function observed in the examples (l)(m)(n)(o) has the pattern:

proposition + demonstration

One of the speakers first raises a proposition, one of them starts demonstrating, and when another finds it interesting, she/he joins it. The proposition is about something in the future or in the imagination. Even when it is not necessary to demonstrate the whole process, they do the demonstration anyway. This is because the important thing is not the content but the way how the communication proceeds. The speakers, who are actors/ actresses, dramatize the imaginary communication. All the examples for this function employed zero quotation direct styles. Interestingly enough, even though they do not make clear who said what, both of them understand the event, smoothly start the demonstrations, and collaboratively build up the narrations. They have the effects of irony, humor, realness, etc. This function works for reporting both written and spoken communication.

4. Correlations between Reporting Styles and Functions

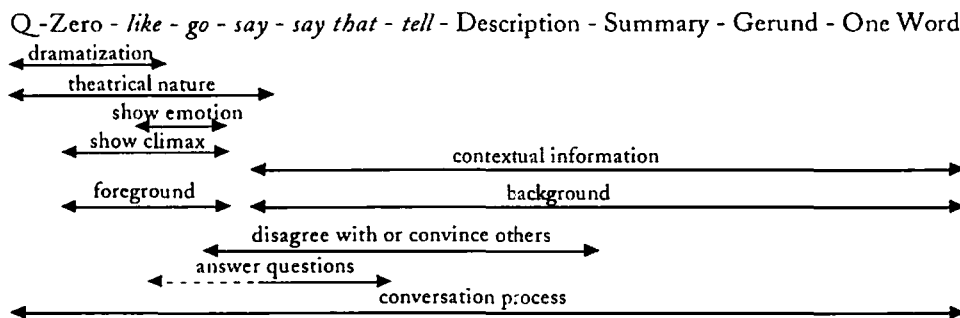
So far, I have shown five of the interactional functions of reporting discourse. Each function had certain tendencies of different styles. In order to better understand the correlations between the interactional functions and the reporting styles, they are represented on a continuum⁶ in the following:

(tense alternation added)⁷
 (variation of verbs added)

⁶The categorization of reporting discourse is a controversial aspect of reporting discourse (Coulmas, 1986; Sakita, 1992). In my view, the stylistic variations are better explained in a continuum rather than in a binary distinction of direct vs. indirect styles. The continuum shown in this paper was formulated in an experimental study of myself (Sakita, 1995), in which I compared reporting utterances with original utterances to see stylistic variations. The left side of the continuum carries the characteristics of direct style, and the right side carries those of indirect style. The boundary between the two is fuzzy.

"Q" at the left end of the continuum includes quoting the original discourse by using audiotapes and videos as seen in TV or radio news. "Zero" represents the reportings without any introductory phrases. From *like to tell* are the reportings categorized by their reporting verbs. "Gerund" includes the reportings which use gerunds instead of reported clauses. "One-Word" includes the reportings which condense the reported content to one word as seen in: "He talked about coffee."

⁷Variations of reporting verbs and their tense are omitted on the continuum.



5. Conclusion

This study presented some interactional functions of reporting discourse observed in English conversation. Reporting discourse, as a form of evidentiality, is employed as a discourse strategy to support one's proposition or even to support one's lack of information. In the latter sense, it works to keep the conversation flowing. It was also discussed as a strategy to avoid a personal commitment or responsibility. Showing effect of reporting discourse is the important tactics of conversation. When it is easy to guess what is coming in the climax, showing how it happened rather than what happened is more effective. In the emotional context, after stating emotion, speakers show what is in mind, by exemplifying the emotion. Direct style is the characteristic of this function. Dramatization effect of reporting discourse was argued as an altered version of theatrical nature, in that it does not require the identification of the reported speaker. The characteristics of this function was zero quotation direct style, the cooperative reporting, and inclusion of irony, humor, and realness. Tannen's point that reporting discourse is often used not only to report what actually happened was enriched by its use in representing future or imaginary events. Each function of reporting discourse showed clear patterns of scripts, and reportings tend to follow proposition.

Reporting discourse, an essential part of the nature of language, has much to be explored. This study to examine reporting discourse in linguistic performance is an attempt in the recent pragmatic approaches looking at the transactional and interactional functions of language. Further sets of this study, I believe, will lead us to fully understand a discourse pattern of human reporting behavior as rule governed, purposeful linguistic actions.

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